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Memphis Is Quiet After Disturbances

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Oct. 23 (UPI)—Police patrolled Memphis in 12-hour shifts today, enforcing an uneasy peace following four nights of street violence in black sections.

"The trouble apparently has peaked and we hope things will stay quiet," said Police Capt. Mickey Jones.

The disorders caused thousands of dollars in damages, claimed the life of a three-year-old Negro who was accidentally struck and killed by a police car, and left five whites hospitalized with burns after the firebombing of a lounge.

Firemen and police responded to more than 800 fire and vandalism calls during the trouble, most of them false alarms.

The turmoil trailed off sharply Friday night, when only two major firebombings were reported.

The trouble started Tuesday after the funeral of 17-year-old Elton Hayes who, blacks charge, was killed by police.

Hayes died of a crushed skull while in police custody Oct. 15, and the original police report indicated he was fatally injured in the wreck of a pickup truck in which he was being chased for a traffic violation.

Shelby County prosecutor Phil Canale said later, however, that an autopsy showed death resulted from two blows on the head. Twenty-three city policemen were removed from duty and put on vacation status with pay by Police Chief Henry Lux pending outcome of Canale's investigation.

Two other young blacks riding in the pickup truck with Hayes claimed that all had been dragged from the cab after the truck stopped and were beaten with billy clubs. They said the truck never wrecked.

Canale said he was sure that one or more indictments will be taken before the grand jury in the case. But he said the investigation was proceeding slowly with hundreds of pieces of evidence being turned over to the FBI.

Lux, under heavy fire from black leaders, said Thursday it would take more than "a magic wand" to improve the police force and soften racial tensions in Memphis.

He denied charges by black leaders that his department had used excessive force in dealing with the situation. But he admitted that more education was needed to upgrade the caliber of policemen.